



EMERGENCY MANAGEMENT NEWS

**The Monthly Electronic Newsletter of
Homeland Security and Emergency Management**
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NEW DIRECTOR SWORN IN – Christopher M. Pope was sworn in August 15th as New Hampshire's first Director of Homeland Security and Emergency Management. Governor John Lynch administered the oath of office in the Executive Council Chamber before an audience of family members, members of the state's fire service and the Concord Fire Department and other state officials. He started his new job immediately.



MAJOR TERRORIST PLOT BROKEN UP BY BRITS – Americans awoke on the morning of August 10th to news that British police had broken up a plot by alleged Islamic terrorists to blow up at least 10 passenger jets on flights from the U.K. to New York, Washington and California. Twenty-three suspects, mainly British citizens of Pakistani descent, were arrested. British authorities said the plotters planned to blow up the planes in mid-flight using liquid explosives. American airports, including Manchester-Boston Regional Airport, sharply increased security, banning carry-on luggage and any kind of liquid. The stepped-up security caused long lines at airport security checkpoints; but after a day or two air traffic had returned mostly to normal.

The alleged plot triggered the first-ever use of the red, or severe, designation of the Homeland Security threat level, for air traffic between the U.K. and U.S. All other civil aviation was designated orange, or high. Other sectors remained at yellow, or elevated. The red designation was reduced to orange on August 14th.

PUBLIC WORKS MUTUAL AID GETS MEDIA COVERAGE – Associated Press writer David Terrill-Wysocki wrote a feature article on Public Works Mutual Aid that ran in many New Hampshire newspapers on August 14th. The article detailed the background of the program, which was created in the wake of the January 1998 ice storm, and pointed out that it wasn't used until the October 2005 floods. The message of the article was clear: if mutual aid works for fire, police and public utilities, it can do the same for public works departments when they respond to an emergency. Eighty-nine municipalities in the state now belong to the organization.

For information on Public Works Mutual Aid, see www.T2.unh.edu/MA.

THANK YOU TO N.H. HOSPITAL FOOD SERVICES – When the state Emergency Operations Center is activated, usually on short notice, Emergency Management personnel and liaisons from other organizations can't take time out for meals. Food, provided by the kitchen at N.H. Hospital, keeps EOC staffers going around the clock. Assistant Food Service Director Walter Ginalski says his crew serves 350 to 400 meals per day at the hospital. A full EOC activation can add nearly another 200 meals per day to their workload, including breakfast, lunch, dinner and a meal for the night shift. They did that for two weeks during the October floods and for nine days for the May flood activation. Everyone working in the EOC appreciates their efforts.

On August 10th, Assistant Director Kathryn Doult presented N.H. Hospital Food Services with a certificate of appreciation for its excellent work.

SUMMER WEATHER TAXES POWER GRID – Extreme heat and intense thunderstorm activity that started last month continued into early August in New Hampshire. Temperatures reached near-triple digits in many areas of the state on August 1st and 2nd, prompting energy conservation measures to cope with record power demand and causing local officials to open cooling stations in half a dozen communities. No heat-related fatalities were reported in New Hampshire, but fire stations, community centers and libraries were opened for extended hours in Manchester, Pelham, Salisbury, Keene and Laconia to assist people who needed a break from the heat. Violent thunderstorms triggered by the heat and humidity brought down trees and knocked out power to about 8,500 Public Service Company of New Hampshire customers in Manchester, Nashua, Candia, Newport, Lyme, Haverhill, the Lakes Region and the Seacoast. Lightning strikes caused building fires in Portsmouth, Newmarket, North Hampton and Thornton.

ISO-New England reported a new record for power demand on August 2nd of 28,021 megawatts. The previous record of 27,401 MW was set the day before. The grid operator implemented a variety of conservation measures to meet the demand, including a five percent voltage reduction. PSNH and Unitil also reported record demand for the day.

SO... WHAT HAPPENED TO HURRICANE SEASON? – Judging from some of the preseason hype you might have thought that New England was guaranteed to get a devastating hurricane this year - a rerun of the Hurricane of '38, even. Here it is August and so far not one hurricane has materialized. Alberto, Beryl, Chris and Debby all failed to make the grade. As of Monday morning (August 28th), Ernesto is expected to strike southern Florida with hurricane force in less than two days. But in New England, we are not out of the woods yet. Hurricane season lasts until November 30 and the period of greatest danger for this region runs through mid-September. Forecasters have scaled back on their predictions a bit, but they still consider this an active hurricane season that could produce major storms. By this time last year there had been two major hurricanes in the Atlantic Basin. The really devastating storms didn't occur until later in the season.

SEABROOK WORKS ON CHANGES TO ECL CRITERIA – Seabrook Station emergency planners are working on a new set of matrices to be used to determine the Emergency Classification Levels (ECLs) for incidents at the plant. The system, which is scheduled to be finalized and submitted to the Nuclear Regulatory Commission by the end of the year, is similar to those already in use by about three-quarters of the nation's 103 nuclear power plants. The ECLs themselves, Unusual Event, Alert, Site Area Emergency and General Emergency, will NOT change. Only the criteria determining the ECLs will be modified.

Seabrook emergency planners explained the proposal to state and local emergency officials at a meeting at the state Fire Academy on August 21st.

AMATEUR RADIO CAN HELP LOCAL EMDs – Amateur radio operators have a strong tradition of public service and are willing and able to help emergency management directors with backup communications. Ham radio operators are highly skilled, own their equipment and operate on their own assigned frequencies. For more information on Amateur Radio Emergency Service, contact the New Hampshire emergency coordinator, Dave Colter, WA1ZCN, at dbcolter@adelphia.net.

CITIZEN CORPS TO HOLD SECOND STATEWIDE CONFERENCE – N.H. Citizen Corps will hold its second annual statewide conference at the state Fire Academy on Saturday, September 16th. The conference is for members of Community Emergency Response Teams, other volunteer emergency workers and emergency management personnel. For more information or to register for the conference, go to www.volunteernh.org.